

Message Text

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CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TOKYO 07279

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, JA
SUBJECT: DSP TALKS LDP COOPERATION/COALITION

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SUMMARY: WITH ADOPTION OF "RESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION" POLICY
AT ITS ANNUAL CONVENTION APRIL 12-15, DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST
PARTY (DSP) TOOK SIGNIFICANT STEP TOWARD COOPERATION, AND
POSSIBLY FUTURE COALITION, WITH LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY
(LDP), AND FOR FIRST TIME REJECTED AS POTENTIAL COALITION
PARTNER, JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY (JSP), WHICH DSP BELIEVES
IS NOT PREPARED TO ADOPT REALISTIC POLICIES. DSP LEADERS
HOPE NEW PROGRAM WILL LEAD TO CLOSER COOPERATION WITH
OTHER CENTRIST PARTIES, ENABLING THEM COLLECTIVELY TO
EXERT GREATER INFLUENCE ON LDP. NEW POLICIES APPEAR TO
REST IN PART ON UNLIKELY PREMISE THAT LDP WILL LOSE CURRENT
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SLIM DIET MAJORITY IN NEXT GENERAL ELECTION. MORE LIKELY
LDP VICTORY, ON OTHER HAND COULD SEVERELY SET BACK NOT
ONLY DSP BUT CENTRIST PARTIES AS WHOLE. IN SHORT-TERM,
HOWEVER, NEW PLATFORM WILL PROBABLY IMPROVE COORDINATION
OF CENTRIST "CONVOY" AND KEEP IT MOVING TOWARD RESPONSIBLE
POSITIONS ON ISSUES OF INTEREST TO U.S., INCLUDING DEFENSE
AND TRADE. NEW POLICIES ALSO PROVIDE FURTHER GUARANTEE,

IF ONE IS NEEDED, OF CONTINUED, STABLE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT IN JAPAN. END SUMMARY.

1. AT ITS ANNUAL CONVENTION APRIL 12-15, DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST PARTY (DSP) ADOPTED ACTION PROGRAM DEDICATING PARTY TO COOPERATION WITH LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (LDP) ADMINISTRATION ON CRUCIAL NATIONAL ISSUES, AND TO PURSUIT OF CONSERVATIVE-PROGRESSIVE COALITION GOVERNMENT SHOULD LDP LOSE ITS THIN DIET MAJORITY. NEW POSTURE, DUBBED "RESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION" (SEKININ YATO), STRESSES ECONOMIC RECOVERY, LAW AND ORDER (IN WAKE OF NARITA INCIDENT -- REFTEL A), AND SUPPORT FOR ADEQUATE DEFENSE FORCE, AND MUTUAL SECURITY TREATY (MST). ALTHOUGH CRITICAL OF LDP, PROGRAM STATES THAT PREVIOUS POLICY OF PROMOTING PROGRESSIVE COALITION AMONG DSP, CLEAN GOVERNMENT PARTY (CGP) AND JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY (JSP) TO REPLACE CONSERVATIVES IS NO LONGER FEASIBLE GIVEN STRENGTH OF FAR LEFT ELEMENTS IN JSP. DSP THEREFORE NOW ADVOCATES STRENGTHENING CENTRIST PARTY (DSP, CGP AND NEW LIBERAL CLUB) COOPERATION IN CURRENT DIET DELIBERATIONS, AND PREPARATION FOR CONSERVATIVE-CENTRIST COALITION GOVERNMENT. PROGRAM ALSO CALLS FOR YEN 20 TRILLION TAX CUT AS PART OF LARGE SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET THIS FALL TO STIMULATE ECONOMY, AND FOR MEASURES QUICKLY TO EXPAND IMPORTS. IT ALSO CALLS FOR ESTABLISHING DIET STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENSE TO FURTHER PUBLIC DEBATE ON SECURITY ISSUES, AND FOR PROMOTION OF NUCLEAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT.

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2. IN HIS OPENING ADDRESS APRIL 12, DSP CHAIRMAN RYOSAKU SASAKI SAID "RESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION" POLICIES WERE DESIGNED TO REASSURE JAPANESE VOTERS THAT LOSS OF DIET MAJORITY BY LDP IN SOME FUTURE ELECTION WOULD NOT LEAD TO POLITICAL INSTABILITY. SASAKI SAID CONTRADICTION BETWEEN LOW PUBLIC OPINION RATINGS FOR LDP ADMINISTRATIONS AND CONTINUED CONSERVATIVE VICTORY AT POLLS WAS DUE TO PUBLIC BELIEF THAT OPPOSITION, ESPECIALLY JSP AND JAPAN COMMUNIST PARTY (JSP), DID NOT PRESENT REALISTIC ALTERNATIVE. IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE, SASAKI SAID, ISSUES OF GREATEST NATIONAL CONCERN WOULD BE ECONOMIC, ESPECIALLY RISING YEN RATE AND UNEMPLOYMENT, AND DSP, AS "RESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION," WOULD COOPERATE WITH LDP TO OVERCOME CURRENT RECESSION. IN LONGER TERM, HE WAS INSPIRED BY GERMAN MODEL OF COALITION BETWEEN SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND LIBERAL DEMOCRATS AND HOPED TO FORGE SIMILAR ALLIANCE TO SUCCEED ONE-PARTY, LDP GOVERNMENT.

3. ON APRIL 12, HIGH-LEVEL DSP STAFFER, WHO CLAIMED TO HAVE WRITTEN MOST OF NEW ACTION POLICY, TOLD EMBOFF "RESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION" POSTURE WAS ALSO DESIGNED TO HOLD CENTRIST PARTY "CONVOY" TOGETHER AS IT MOVED TOWARD CLOSER COOPERATION WITH LDP. STAFFER SAID THAT INFLUENCE

OF CENTRIST PARTIES DEPENDED ON CONTROL OF CRUCIAL SWING VOTE IN DIET, WHERE LDP MAJORITY WAS TOO THIN TO PERMIT CONSERVATIVES TO PASS CONTROVERSIAL LEGISLATION ALONE. HOWEVER, AS NLC DEMONSTRATED IN FEBRUARY WHEN IT ABANDONED DSP AND CGP TO VOTE FOR LDP BUDGET (REFTEL B), DEFECTION OF ONE PARTY CAN RENDER REMAINING PARTIES POWERLESS. DSP ITSELF, HE SAID, HAD BEEN ANXIOUS TO JOIN NLC IN SUPPORTING BUDGET, BUT HAD BEEN CONSTRAINED BY PRIOR AGREEMENT WITH CGP, WITH WHICH IT HAD SEPARATE AGREEMENT (REFTEL C). NEW POLICY, STAFFER SAID, WAS DESIGNED TO COAX NLC, WHICH HAD BEEN RELUCTANT TO COOPERATE TOO CLOSELY WITH SOCIALIST-ORIENTED OPPOSITION PARTIES, BACK INTO CENTRIST CAMP. AT SAME TIME, IT SERVED NOTICE TO CGP THAT MORE COOPERATION

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WITH LDP WOULD BE PRICE OF CONTINUED SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO PARTIES.

4. THIS INTERPRETATION OF NEW DSP POLICY UNDERSCORED BY APRIL 16 PRESS REPORTS, CONFIRMED BY DSP SOURCES THAT SASAKI HAD INITIATED SECRET MEETING APRIL 1 WITH NLC LEADER YOHEI KONO AND CHAIRMAN YOSHIKATSU TAKEIRI AND SEC GEN JUNYA YONO FROM CGP AT WHICH IT WAS AGREED TO CONSULT BEFORE ANY OF THEM JOINED COALITION GOVERNMENT, AND TO CONTINUE TRIPARTITE COOPERATION EVEN IF ONE OR TWO PARTIES JOINED COALITION. NLC AND CGP LEADERS ALSO REPORTEDLY AGREED WITH SASAKI'S ASSERTION THAT THREE

PARTIES SHOULD MAKE EMERGING NATIONAL CONSENSUS FAVORING MAINTENANCE OF JAPANESE SELF-DEFENSE FORCES AND MST CONDITION FOR THEIR COOPERATION. AT DSP CONVENTION, CONTINUED COOPERATION BETWEEN CGP AND DSP ON THIS BASIS WAS UNDERLINED BY DELIVERY OF CONGRATULATORY ADDRESS BY TAKEIRI, DURING FIRST APPEARANCE OF CGP LEADER AT DSP CONVENTION.
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5. SOME RESERVATIONS CONCERNING NEW POLICY WERE EXPRESSED AT CONVENTION BY DSP'S LABOR SUPPORTERS AND PREFECTURAL CHAPTER LEADERS. DOMEI PRESIDENT SEIJI AMAIKE, IN HIS CONGRATULATORY REMARKS, REMINDED CONVENTION THAT AS "PROGRESSIVE" PARTY, DSP SHOULD CONTINUE PURSUING COOPERATION WITH JSP, AND SOME LOCAL PARTY LEADERS EXPRESSED FEAR THAT DSP WOULD BE PERCEIVED BY VOTERS AS PROPPING-UP DECLINING LDP. IN END, HOWEVER, CONVENTION VOTED OVERWHELMINGLY TO GIVE SASAKI WHAT HE HAD ASKED: FREE HAND TO EXPLORE COALITION WITH LDP IF CONSERVATIVES LOST THEIR MAJORITY.

6. REACTION OF PRESS, WHICH HAS BEEN SKEPTICAL OF DSP COOPERATION WITH LDP IN PAST, WAS CAUTIOUS. WHILE GRANTING NEED FOR OPPOSITION PARTIES TO BOLSTER PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THEIR ABILITY TO GOVERN, MOST EDITORIALISTS FEARED IMPACT OF SMALL PARTIES SUCH AS DSP ON MUCH LARGER LDP WOULD BE LIMITED, AND THAT CENTRIST PARTIES WOULD SIMPLY BE MANIPULATED BY CONSERVATIVES INTO SUPPORTING SAME OLD POLICIES.

7. COMMENT: "RESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION" POLICY TO BE SURE REPRESENTS FURTHER SIGNIFICANT STEP TOWARD LDP FOR DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS, BUT HAS ITS ANTECEDENTS. PARTY ALREADY VOTES WITH LDP ON MANY CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES, SUCH AS DEFENSE-RELATED MATTERS AND RELATIONS WITH ROK. WHILE ITS LABOR UNION SUPPORTERS HAVE FROM TIME-TO-TIME EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ABOUT DSP'S DRIFT TO RIGHT, POSITION OF DOMEI LEADERSHIP ON MOST ECONOMIC ISSUES BASICALLY DIFFERS LITTLE FROM THAT OF MANAGEMENT, WHICH SUPPORTS LDP. MOREOVER, DSP CANDIDATES THEMSELVES HAVE INCREASINGLY BEEN BENEFICIARIES OF SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL AND, TO MORE LIMITED DEGREE, ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FROM SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESS
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FEDERATIONS, AND SEVERAL LARGE BUDDHIST SECT LAYMENS ORGANIZATIONS -- ALL CONSERVATIVE GROUPS THAT HAVE BACKED

LDP IN PAST. WHILE HITHERTO CAUTIOUS TO AVOID LEFTIST CHARGES OF SELL-OUT, PERHAPS DRIVING AWAY SOME VOTERS WHICH SMALL PARTY LIKE DSP CAN ILL AFFORD TO LOSE, PREVIOUS CONVENTIONS, TRYING TO HAVE IT BOTH WAYS, HAD EDGED TOWARD "RESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION WITH SLOGANS SUCH AS HEALTHY PROGRESSIVE POLITICS," AND "CONSTRUCTIVE OPPOSITION."

8. NEW PROGRAM DIFFERS FROM ITS PRECEDENTORS IN TWO IMPORTANT WAYS: FIRST, IT JETTISONS DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS' LONGSTANDING ADVOCACY OF BROAD CONSERVATIVE-PROGRESSIVE COALITION GOVERNMENT THAT WOULD INCLUDE JSP; SECOND, IT OPENLY ADVOCATES COALITION WITH LDP. DECISION TO JETTISON JSP OCCASIONED BY INABILITY OR DISINCLINATION OF NEW JSP PARTY CHAIRMAN ASUKATA TO MOVE SOCIALISTS AWAY FROM WORN-OUT DOGMA.

9. THE CATCH IS THAT DSP'S NEW "CENTRIST" STRATEGY DEPENDS TO LARGE EXTENT ON CONTINUED LDP LOSSES, AND RECIPROCAL CENTRIST ELECTION GAINS, PROSPECTS FOR WHICH ARE NOT VERY GOOD AT PRESENT. DSP MANAGED IN 1976 GENERAL ELECTIONS TO GAIN 10 LOWER HOUSE SEATS, FOR TOTAL OF 29, DESPITE DECLINE IN ITS PERCENTAGE OF POPULAR VOTE. SINCE PARTY DEPENDS TO LARGE EXTENT ON VOTES OF WELL-ORGANIZED PRIVATE SECTOR UNION, SMALL BUSINESS, AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS, IT MAY BE ABLE TO HOLD ON TO ITS CURRENT SEATS BUT FEW ANALYSTS BELIEVE KIND OF OPTIMISM DSP IS CURRENTLY DISPLAYING IS WARRANTED. DSP'S MORE CONSERVATIVE IMAGE IS UNLIKELY TO ATTRACT NEW, UNCOMMITTED VOTERS, AND CONSENSUS SEEMS TO BE THAT IF ELECTION WERE HELD SOON NLC AND CGP IN TURN WOULD PROBABLY LOSE SEVERAL SEATS EACH, WHILE LDP WOULD GAIN MANY OF SEATS IT LOST IN 1976. SHOULD THIS SCENARIO TRANSPIRE, CENTRIST PARTIES, PARTICULARLY DSP, COULD BE HARD-PRESSED TO DEFEND COOPERATION WITH LDP AND, PERHAPS, WITH ONE

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ANOTHER. WHILE DSP LEADERS CLAIM THEY ARE PREPARED FOR THIS POSSIBILITY, WE SUSPECT ELECTION SETBACK WOULD PLACE STRAIN ON CENTRIST COOPERATION.

10. IN SHORT-TERM, HOWEVER, DSP POLICY MAY LEAD TO INCREASED PARTY INFLUENCE THROUGH SOME FORM OF INSTITUTIONALIZED DIET COOPERATION WITH LDP ON ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. LAST FEBRUARY SASAKI CALLED FOR SUPRA-PARTISAN COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF LDP, NLC, DSP AND CGP TO DESIGN POLICIES TO SPEED ECONOMIC RECOVERY, AND IN MARCH, HAD UNPRECEDENTED PRIVATE DISCUSSION OF ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WITH PRIMIN FUKUDA. WHILE DSP WILL PRESUMABLY CONTINUE EFFORTS TO AMEND LDP BUDGETS IN COOPERATION WITH NLC AND CGP, IT SEEMS LIKELY DSP WILL CONSULT WITH LDP MORE CLOSELY, AND THIS FALL WILL RETURN TO PAST POLICY OF VOTING FOR GOJ BUDGETS.

11. IN TERMS OF U.S. INTERESTS RESULTS OF LATEST DSP CONVENTION APPEAR HIGHLY POSITIVE. COMMITMENT TO DIET COOPERATION WITH LDP, AND TO CONSIDERATION OF COALITION, CONFIDENTIAL

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SHOULD BE FURTHER GUARANTEE, SHOULD ONE BE NEEDED, OF CONTINUED STABLE, DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP IN JAPAN. DSP SUPPORT FOR MEASURES TO SPEED BUSINESS RECOVERY, AND EXPAND IMPORTS, WILL HELP INSURE SWIFT PASSAGE OF EXPANSIONARY SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET THIS FALL, AND ADDS, AT LEAST marginally, TO PRESSURE ON GOJ TO REMOVE TRADE BARRIERS. FINALLY, DSP EFFORTS TO FIRM UP NATIONAL CONSENSUS BEHIND JAPANESE DEFENSE EFFORTS AND MST WILL CONTRIBUTE TO CURRENT NATIONAL TREND TOWARD MORE REALISTIC PUBLIC APPROACH TO SECURITY ISSUES. MANSFIELD

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